E –Travel News

Happy New Year to All from PSC

Is your UTS password updated?

During the month of January, an enhancement to UTS was implemented. All passwords must be updated and contain 8-15 alpha-numeric characters to meet the standard security requirements. Passwords will be automatically updated if not changed, and you will be locked out of the UTS system. You may use the "Forgot Password" function to update your password in compliance with password security requirements. Passwords **should contain 8-15 alpha-numeric characters** *Remember, it is a security violation and risk to yourself to share your password with anyone.*

GTR Reminder:

When claiming transportation costs, member should only claim the "cost of the GTR" or the actual cost of travel, not both. Please refer to the June 04 newsletter for the correct calculation of the cost of GTR. Additionally, when calculating transportation costs please use the City Pairs website (http://apps.fss.gsa.gov/citypairs/search) for government contracted airfare costs and the DTOT Electronic Transportation Acquisition (ETA) system website (http://dtod.sddc.army.mil/new_dtod_faq.asp) for "official" mileage expenses.

Travel Advance Liquidation Questions:

If you have received a letter from the Coast Guard Finance Center regarding an outstanding travel advance and have further questions, please go to https://www.fincen.uscg.mil/secure/tacinquiry.htm for assistance in resolving your situation.

Change 213 to the JFTR:

Please note that effective July 1, 2004, there was a change to U2015 of the JFTR that indicates a statement must be on each travel order indicating whether transportation tickets are purchased using a centrally billed account (GTA) or an individually billed account (member's credit card). If this information changes prior to submitting travel claim for reimbursement, an amendment will be required.

PSC Audits?

The PSC UTS Audit Staff works diligently and hard to accomplish several goals for our travel customers. Their responsibilities include ensuring travel claims are properly submitted and documented and that the traveler receives correct entitlements. In some cases, this means that we will have to recoup erroneous or improper payments. However, we also find cases where members are entitled to more money than received. When this occurs, we notify the traveler via e-mail of the potential underpayment and have him/her submit a supplemental to claim any additional monies due.

Reminder about Reduced Mileage:

Effective 1 November 2004, new POC Mileage requirements were established. If you are authorized standard mileage for use of your POC, you may choose "auto mileage" in the reimbursable items in UTS. Enter the total miles and it will calculate the amount.   You will notice two other "reduced mileage" reimbursable items. These are listed to comply with the new requirements and must be selected if you are only authorized reduced mileage. For reimbursement you must choose the correct rate, calculate the actual miles you drove by the authorized rate (i.e. 126 miles x .105= 13.23) and place the MONETARY AMOUNT you are authorized in the total claimed (13.23 as show by the example), not the total miles driven. For more information regarding limits and authorizations on mileage, please see ALCOAST 456/04.

E-Travel News Continued…

E-Travel Coming to the Coast Guard:
The E-Travel initiative was launched in response to one of the 24 E-Government projects directed by President's Management Agenda. The end goal of E-Travel is to address the challenge of reengineering the government's travel function systems. E-Travel is designed to improve the efficiency of Federal travel by implementing the latest technology, making the system simpler for users and increasing the ability for quality and timely services through every step of the process.

E-Travel will provide a government-wide web-based service that applies world-class travel management practices to federal travel, thereby reducing costs while creating greater customer satisfaction. The E-Travel Service will be commercially contracted by one of three E-Travel vendors.

The new E-Travel will deliver a common, automated approach Coast Guard wide for managing temporary duty travel. The E-Travel service will significantly improve the efficiency, broaden the range of travel-related services available to members, provide immediate agency cost savings through on-line transaction processing, and create a self-service environment that is easy-to-use and customer focused. This new system will be a Web-based environment that will track every step of the travel process – from travel authorization to reservations of travel, hotel accommodations and rental cars to the approval requirements. It will also interface with the Coast Guard accounting system to track payment of travel claims & voucher reconciliation. Travelers will be able to prepare and submit travel information electronically through desktops, laptops, or handheld electronic devices at anytime or location that they choose, even through the Internet.

The Travel Branch along with HQ personnel are currently reviewing/testing JFTR compliance. We anticipate implementation to begin sometime this year. Watch for continuing developments…

Common problems that crash claims in the UTS system:
*Use of multiple modes of travel in itinerary – see primary mode of transportation in February & June's Newsletter.
*Members use POVADV or GTR incorrectly and do not input layover points in itinerary – see GTR in June's Newsletter.
*Input multiple lines of accounting strings on one claim – see Accounting string errors in March's Newsletter.
*Input more than seven legs on a single 13-doc travel claim. Please limit each claim to no more than 5-7 legs per claim.
*When entering itinerary into system, member indicates they are on leave the same day they are TDY. Double-check dates.

** A brief reminder:
**When submitting manual claims to PSC for processing, please include in the packet: the original 1351-2 with original signatures by the member and AO, original orders and amendments with original signatures or certification of original with an original signature, and receipts.
**Computer generated random audits are done on approximately 15% of the UTS claims received by PSC. Any claim that is over $2,500 in total entitlements receives a mandatory audit. These audit requests are important to ensure accuracy of the system and meet GAO requirements.

Be sure to check this site for updated information:
http://www.uscg.mil/hq/psc/utsfaq.shtm
Here is where you can find other issues of the UTS E-Travel News:
http://www.uscg.mil/hq/psc/uts/index.htm
Please share this important information with all of your travelers in your unit/area so they can stay informed of important UTS changes and improvements. Please send your suggestions for improvements to the Customer Service Division via a heat ticket:
http://www.uscg.mil/hq/psc/customerservice.htm

Coming next edition: Summer TDY Reminders ☺